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MARVEL COMICS
X-CUTIONER'S SONG
PART 11
X-MEN
$1.50 US
$1.80 CAN/UK 80p
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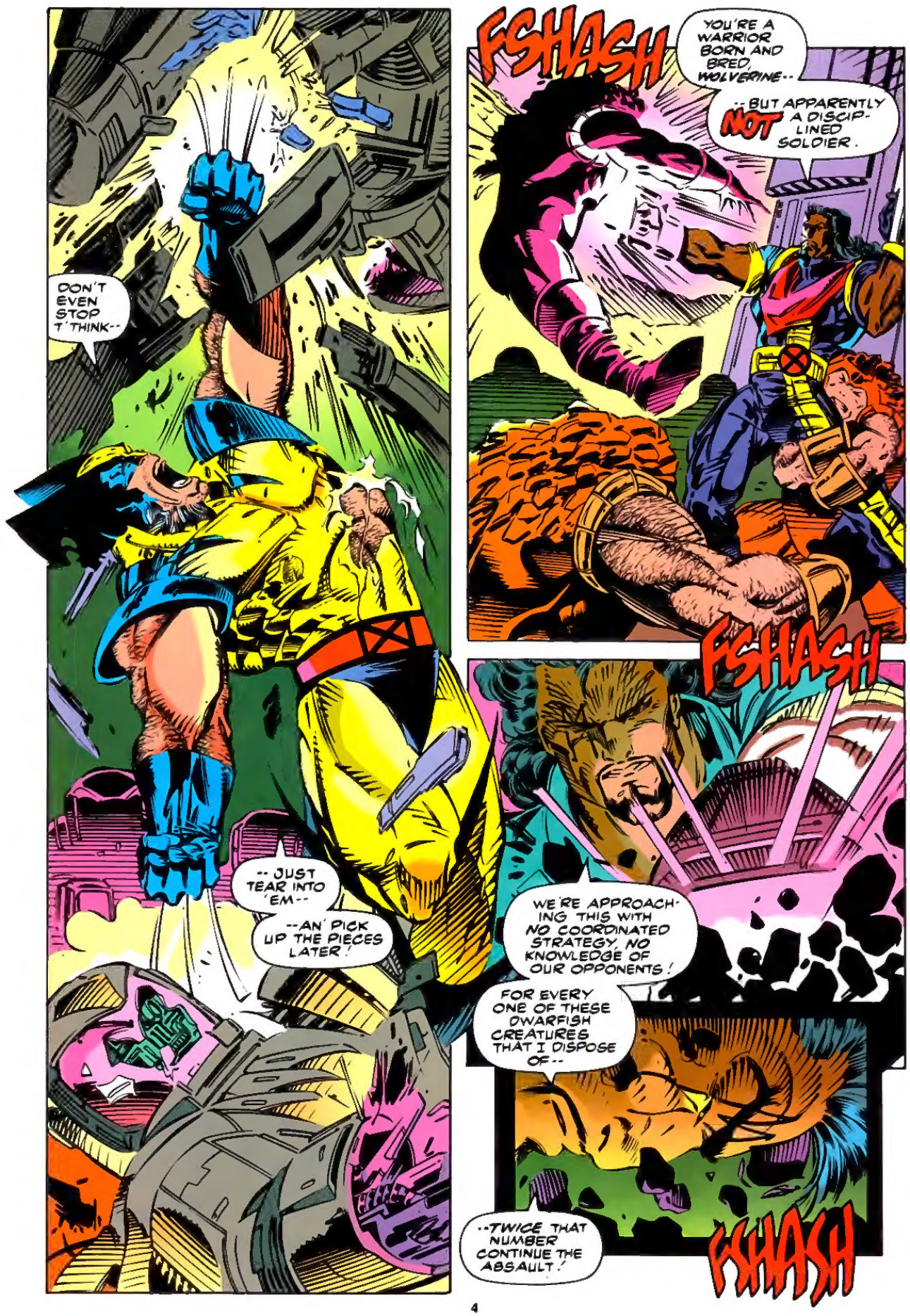
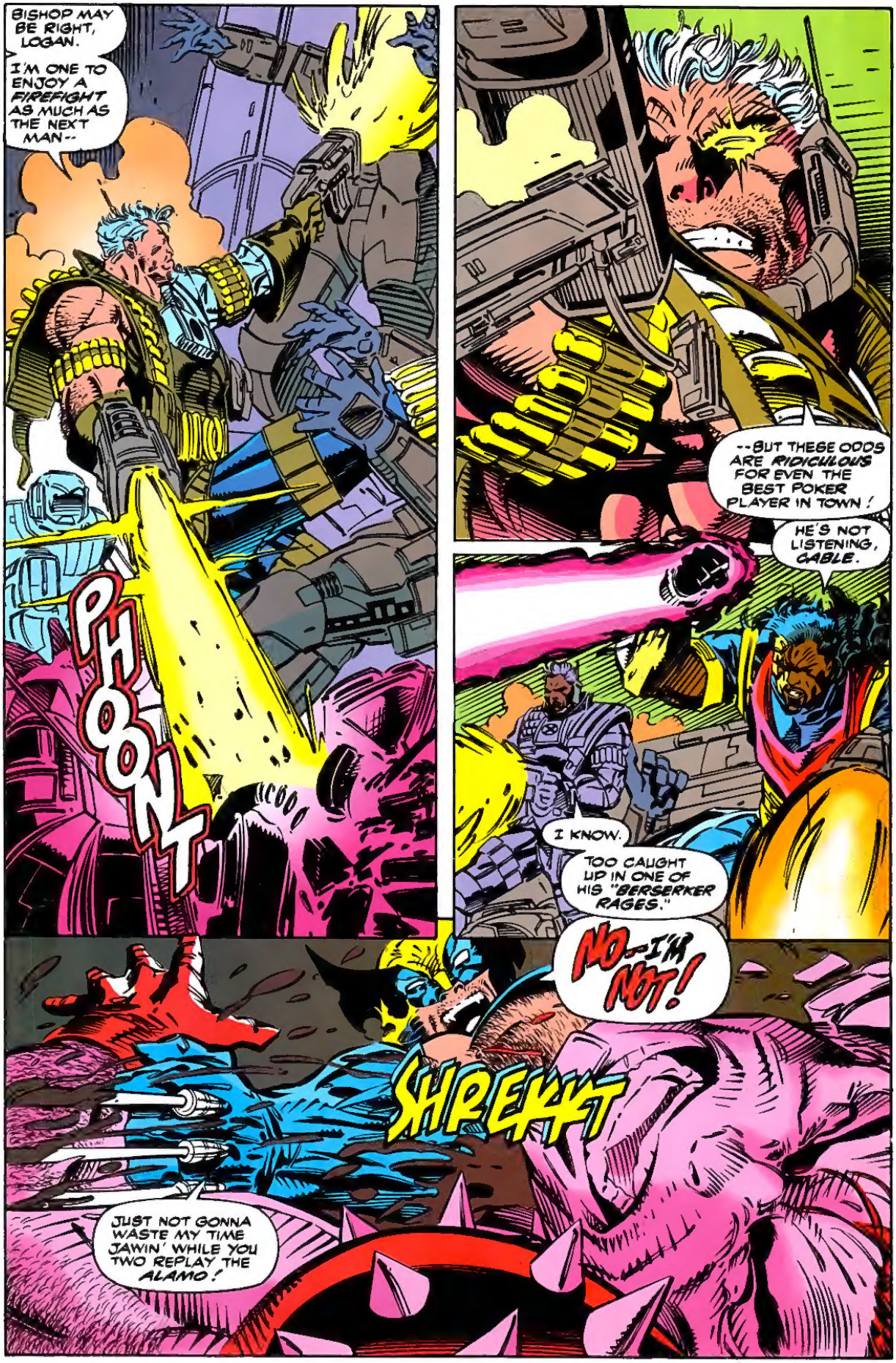
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
ANDY KUBERT
MARK PENNINGTON

X-MEN™ Vol. 1, No. 18, January, 1993. (ISSN # 1057-6819) Published by MARVEL COMICS; Terry Stewart, President; Stan Lee, Publisher; Michael Hobson, Group Vice President, Publishing. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT NEW YORK, N.Y. AND AT ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES. Published monthly. Copyright © 1992 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. All rights reserved. Price $1.50 per copy in the U.S. and $1.90 in Canada. Subscription rate for 12 issues: U.S. $15.00; Canadian subscribers must add $8.00 for postage and GST. GST #R127032852. Foreign $27.00. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the condition that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. THE X-MEN (including all prominent characters featured in this issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof) is a trademark of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, INC. POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO THE X-MEN, c/o MARVEL COMICS, SUBSCRIPTION DEPT., 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, NY 10016. Printed in Canada.

FOR THESE THREE HARD-BITTEN MEN OF WAR, FURTHER TALK IS UNNECESSARY.
THEY KNOW THEY ARE OUTNUMBERED AND OVERWHELMED. BUT THEY KNOW, TOO, THEY ARE THE BEST AT WHAT THEY DO.
THE ARMORED SOLDIERS OF THE MUTANT LIBERATION FRONT REACT FAR TOO SLOWLY--
--AS DO THE GENE-SPAWNS OF APOCALYPSE, THE BLACK RIDERS, WHO NOW SERVE A NEW MASTER--
--THE MADMAN-RIPPED-THROUGH-TIME WHO ENGINEERED THIS TITANIC BATTLE...STRYFE!
THAT MOMENT'S UNCERTAINTY IS ALL THESE STAR-CROSSED SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE NEEDS TO PRESS THEIR ATTACK--
STAN LEE PRESENTS THE PENULTIMATE CHAPTER OF THE MOST SOUL-SEARING MUTANT STORYLINE EVER!
CONFLICTING CATHEXES
X-CUTIONER'S SONG PART II
BROUGHT TO YOU BY
FABIAN NICIEZA WRITER, ALL THE PAGES
ANDY KUBERT PENCILER, INKER, PGS. 20-23
MARK PENNINGTON INKER, EVERYTHING ELSE
CHRIS ELIOPOULOS - LETTERER
JOE ROSAS - COLORIST
BOB HARRAS EDITOR
TOM DEFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF


DON'T EVEN STOP T'THINK--
-- JUST TEAR INTO 'EM--
--AN' PICK UP THE PIECES LATER!
FSHASH
YOU'RE A WARRIOR BORN AND BRED, WOLVERINE--
--BUT APPARENTLY NOT A DISCIP-LINED SOLDIER.
FSHASH
WE'RE APPROACH-ING THIS WITH NO COORDINATED STRATEGY, NO KNOWLEDGE OF OUR OPPONENTS!
FOR EVERY ONE OF THESE DWARFISH CREATURES THAT I DISPOSE OF--
--TWICE THAT NUMBER CONTINUE THE ASSAULT!
FSHASH


BISHOP MAY BE RIGHT, LOGAN.
I'M ONE TO ENJOY A FIREFIGHT AS MUCH AS THE NEXT MAN--
PHOONT
--BUT THESE ODDS ARE RIDICULOUS FOR EVEN THE BEST POKER PLAYER IN TOWN!
HE'S NOT LISTENING, CABLE.
I KNOW.
TOO CAUGHT UP IN ONE OF HIS "BERSERKER RAGES."
NO--I'M NOT!
SHREEKT
JUST NOT GONNA WASTE MY TIME JAWIN' WHILE YOU TWO REPLAY THE ALAMO!

WHAT A CHARMING HISTORICAL REFERENCE, X-MEN.
SHYEE-ZAK-T
AND HOW APT!
LOGAN!
SHOT DOWN BY GAUNTLET!
RELAX. JUST MAKE HIM ONE OF A FEW HUNDRED TARGETS TO CHOOSE FROM.
LITTLE GOOD IT DID US. WE'RE COMPLETELY SURROUNDED--
--WITH NO MEANS OF RETREAT!
AND NO DESIRE TO SURRENDER, EITHER!
LOGAN?
HOLD ON-- RIB'S SHATTERED-- PUNCTURED A LUNG--
--HEALING FACTOR KICKIN' IN--
SO THAT MEANS YOU'LL BE NICE AND HEALTHY WHEN WE'RE OVERRUN AND KILLED?

DEATH IS NOT AN OPTION YOU SHOULD BE CONSIDERING TODAY, CABLE!
AS ALWAYS, THE X-MEN FIGHT TOGETHER--
--AND THEY FIGHT FOR LIFE!
IF THE SIGHT OF THEIR ALLIES ALONGSIDE THEIR NEMESIS, APOCALYPSE, SURPRISES THE BELEAGURED TRIO--
--IT IS MORE THAN OFFSET BY THE RELIEF THEY FEEL AT THE TIMELY RESCUE!
THIS IS A GROUP OF MEN AND WOMEN-- STORM, CANNONBALL, ARCHANGEL, ICEMAN, POLARIS, HAVOK AND PSYLOCKE--
--WHO HAVE WAITED-- INDEED, EVEN DESIRED-- THE OPPORTUNITY TO CUT LOOSE, TO GIVE WAY TO THEIR ANGER AND GRIEF--
--SINCE THE MOMENT A SNIPER'S BULLET STRUCK DOWN THEIR MENTOR, CHARLES XAVIER!

AND NO ONE IS MORE AWARE OF THIS FACT THAN THE MASTERMIND BEHIND THE MAYHEM...

STRIKE!

THEY FIGHT WITH SUCH SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS, DON'T THEY, ZERO?

MY LITTLE CHESS GAME COMES UNDONE--

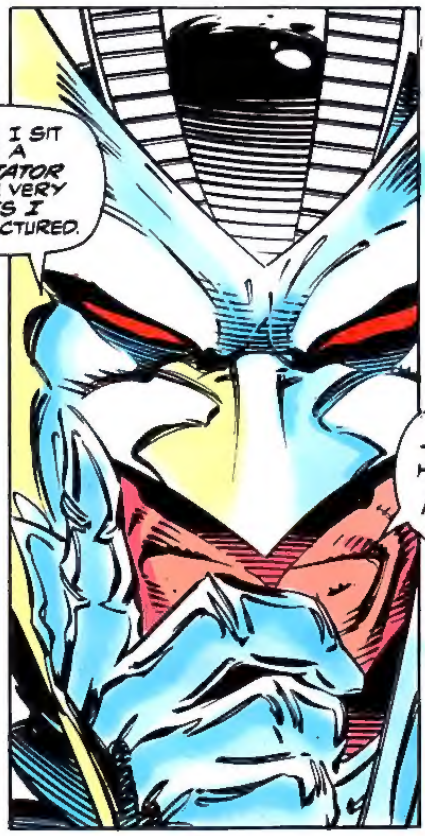
--PLAYERS MOVING ACROSS THE BOARD INTO A SCENARIO I WOULD NOT HAVE ANTICIPATED--

--YET ONE WHICH STILL SUITS MY NEEDS.

SUCH A COMPLICATED TAPESTRY WE HAVE WOVEN.

TIME IS BUT A PUZZLE AND WE PLACE THE PIECES WHERE WE SEE FIT.

AS AWKWARDLY, I IMAGINE, AS THE ANALOGIES I SPOUT.



LOOK AT THEM. SUCH A *DIVERSITY* OF STYLE AND MANNER.

ALL WITH THE SAME OVERRIDING AND OVERWHELMING *GOAL*--

--TO PROTECT, PRESERVE AND PERPETUATE THE FOOLISH *DREAM* THAT HOMO *SUPERIOR* CAN COEXIST IN HARMONY WITH HOMO *SAPIEN*.

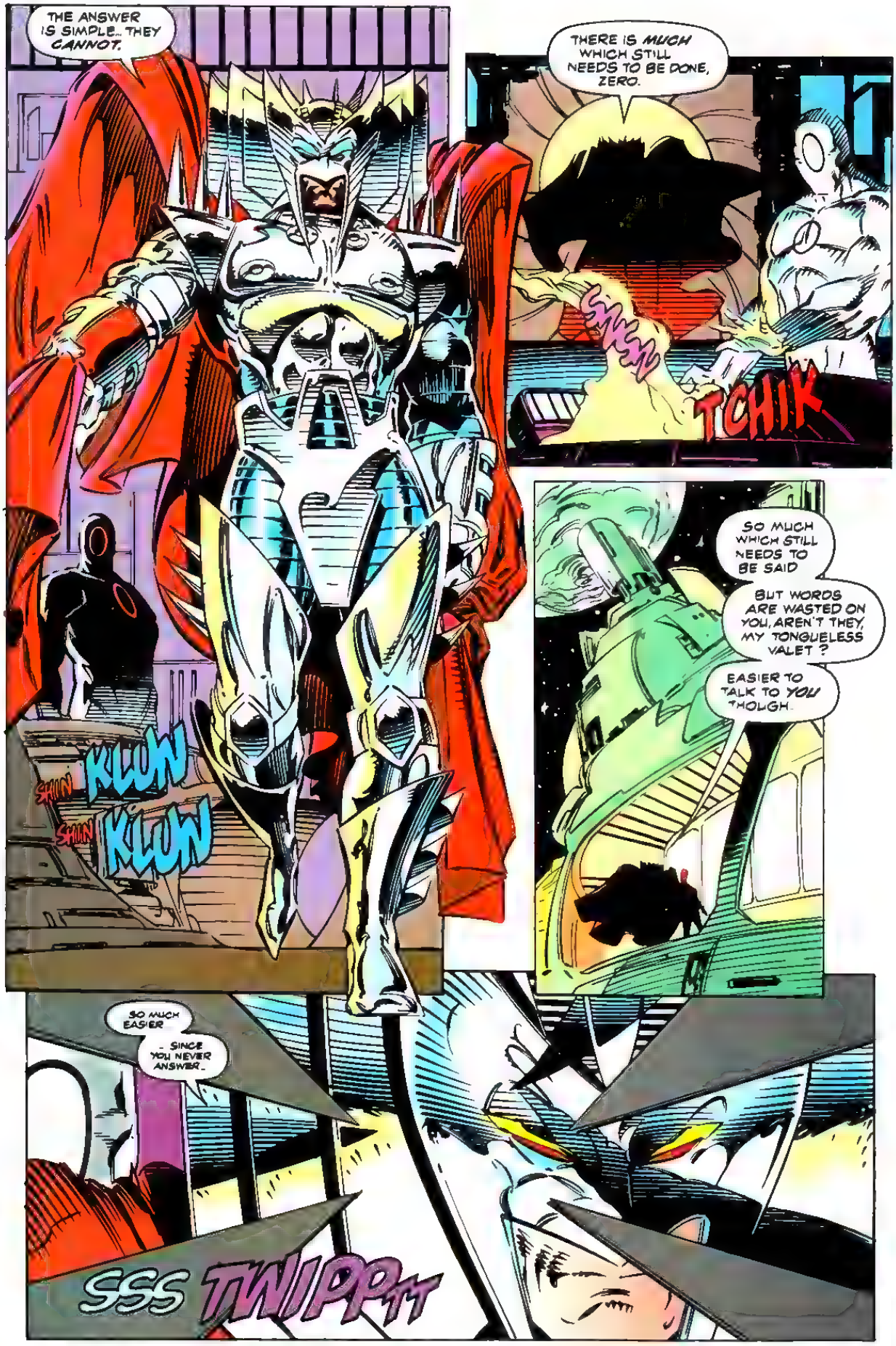
QUITE PREDICTABLY, THEY ROUTE MY FORCES.

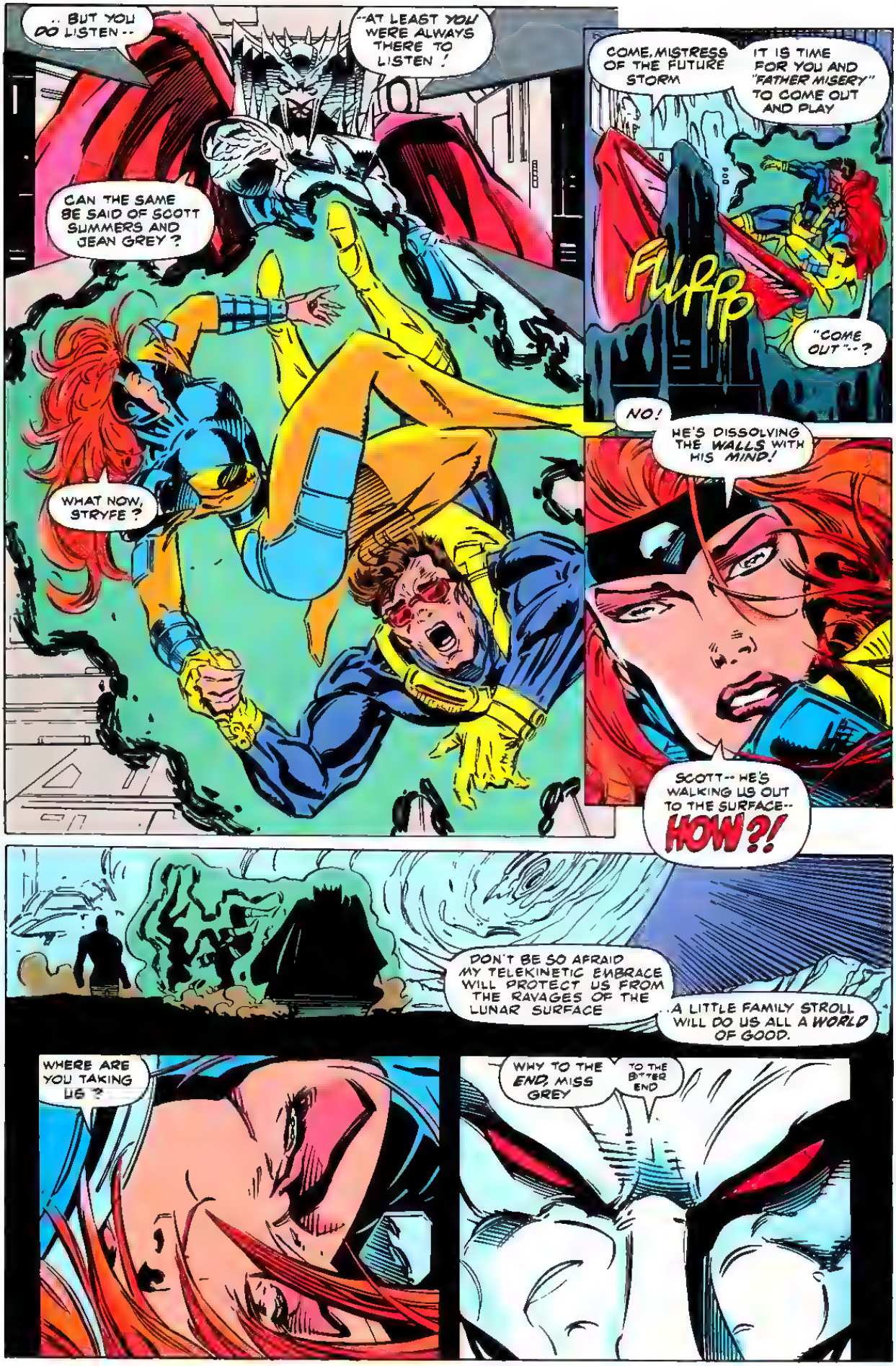
BUT HOW CAN THEY FIGHT THE *INEVITABILITY* OF *TIME*?

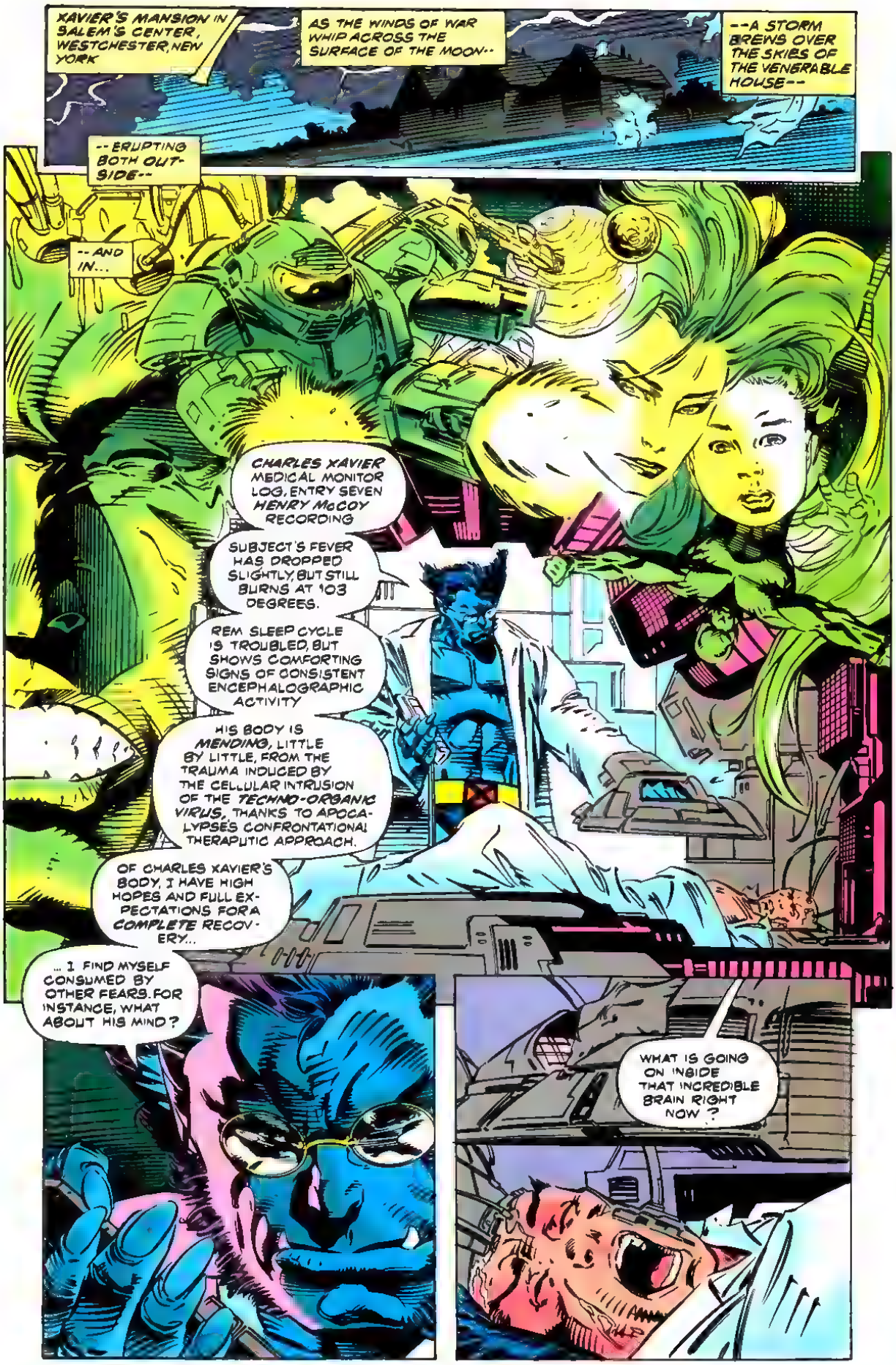
HOW CAN THEY STOP THE *TURNING* OF THE *DAY*?

THE *CRASHING* OF THE *WAVES*?

HOW CAN THEY DEFEAT *ME*, WHEN I AM THEIR *TOMORROW*?

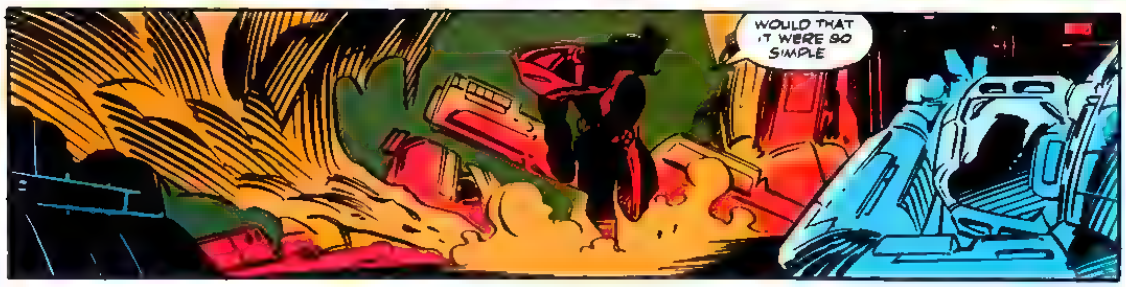

THE ANSWER IS SIMPLE... THEY CANNOT.
THERE IS MUCH WHICH STILL NEEDS TO BE DONE, ZERO.
TCHIK
SHIN KLUN
SHIN KLUN
SO MUCH WHICH STILL NEEDS TO BE SAID
BUT WORDS ARE WASTED ON YOU, AREN'T THEY, MY TONGUELESS VALET ?
EASIER TO TALK TO YOU THOUGH.
SO MUCH EASIER
... SINCE YOU NEVER ANSWER...
SSS TWIPPTT


.. BUT YOU DO LISTEN --
--AT LEAST YOU WERE ALWAYS THERE TO LISTEN !
CAN THE SAME BE SAID OF SCOTT SUMMERS AND JEAN GREY ?
WHAT NOW, STRYFE ?
COME, MISTRESS OF THE FUTURE STORM
IT IS TIME FOR YOU AND "FATHER MISERY" TO COME OUT AND PLAY
FLUPP
"COME OUT"--?
NO!
HE'S DISSOLVING THE WALLS WITH HIS MIND!
SCOTT-- HE'S WALKING US OUT TO THE SURFACE-- HOW?!
DON'T BE SO AFRAID MY TELEKINETIC EMBRACE WILL PROTECT US FROM THE RAVAGES OF THE LUNAR SURFACE
..A LITTLE FAMILY STROLL WILL DO US ALL A WORLD OF GOOD.
WHERE ARE YOU TAKING US ?
WHY TO THE END, MISS GREY
TO THE BITTER END


XAVIER'S MANSION IN SALEM'S CENTER, WESTCHESTER, NEW YORK
AS THE WINDS OF WAR WHIP ACROSS THE SURFACE OF THE MOON--
--A STORM BREWS OVER THE SKIES OF THE VENERABLE HOUSE--
--ERUPTING BOTH OUTSIDE--
--AND IN...
CHARLES XAVIER MEDICAL MONITOR LOG, ENTRY SEVEN HENRY McCOY RECORDING
SUBJECT'S FEVER HAS DROPPED SLIGHTLY, BUT STILL BURNS AT 103 DEGREES.
REM SLEEP CYCLE IS TROUBLED, BUT SHOWS COMFORTING SIGNS OF CONSISTENT ENCEPHALOGRAPHIC ACTIVITY
HIS BODY IS MENDING, LITTLE BY LITTLE, FROM THE TRAUMA INDUCED BY THE CELLULAR INTRUSION OF THE TECHNO-ORGANIC VIRUS, THANKS TO APOCALYPSE'S CONFRONTATIONAL THERAPUTIC APPROACH.
OF CHARLES XAVIER'S BODY, I HAVE HIGH HOPES AND FULL EXPECTATIONS FOR A COMPLETE RECOVERY...
... I FIND MYSELF CONSUMED BY OTHER FEARS. FOR INSTANCE, WHAT ABOUT HIS MIND?
WHAT IS GOING ON INSIDE THAT INCREDIBLE BRAIN RIGHT NOW?

STRYFE'S MOONBASE. FROM THE OUTSIDE, IT IS A MIRACLE OF ELEGANCE AND GRACE...
... AN ARCHITECTURAL WONDER WHICH SPEAKS VOLUMES FOR MAN'S CAPACITY TO LEARN, BUILD AND PROSPER.
FROM THE INSIDE, HOWEVER, IT SUCCUMBS TO HIS BASEST INSTINCTS--IT BREATHES WITH PRIMITIVE PASSIONS--
--ANGER, HATRED AND UNRELENTING VIOLENCE!
WE HAVE MUCH WHICH MUST STILL BE ACCOMPLISHED, X-MEN
OUR FIRST PRIORITY IS TO FIND CYCLOPS AND JEAN
AGREED, STORM--
--BUT WE ALSO BETTER FINISH OFF THE DARK RIDERS--
--AND CONFRONT STRYFE!
POLAR S, CANNONBALL, CABLE AND I ARE ALPHA--
--PSYLOCKE, WOLVERINE AND STORM, BETA UNIT
SO DIVVY UP THE PLAYERS AND LET'S START LOOKIN'!
ALL OF YOU GO. PLAY THE PART OF THE FAMILY
I WILL HUNT ALONE.
SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST, APOCALYPSE?
ALWAYS THE SAME FOR YOU--ONE MAN AGAINST ALL ODDS?
AS I HAVE LIVED MY ENTIRE LIFE

A HARD MAN.
HIS LIFE HAS BEEN MARKED BY *PAIN* AND *LOSS*.
AND THAT'S AN *EXCUSE*, BISHOP?
WHICH ONE OF US HASN'T GONE THROUGH THE *SAME*?
YOU JUST DON'T SEE *US* CHOOSING TO MARK EVERYONE *ELSE'S* LIFE WITH THE SAME BRAND OF *HATRED* THAT'S BEEN INFLICTED ON US
CALM DOWN, WARREN
LOOKS LIKE WE'RE A UNIT BY ATTRITION. FOLKS LET'S BE DELTA HOUSE
WARREN, BISHOP--
--WHAT SAY WE STOP PHILOSOPHIZING AND GO BEAT UP SOME BAD GUYS?



DO YOU SENSE ANYTHING, ELISABETH ?
NOTHING ON STRYFE, ORORO
WOLVERINE ?
FOUR OF 'EM CAME THIS WAY.
BUT THE TRAIL STOPS HERE.
STRYFE'S DEFINITELY MASKING HIS MIND AGAINST MY PROBES
BUT I DO SENSE FAINT RES DUAL TRACES OF CYLOPS--
--BEHIND THAT DOOR UP AHEAD
WHAT ABOUT JEANIE, BETTS? SHE SHOULD BE WITH SCOTTIE.
I ONLY SENSE SCOTT LOGAN
I CAUGHT JEAN'S SCENT, TOO, ORORO
SEEMS T'REASON HER PSYCHIC IMPRINT WOULD BE HERE AS WELL
AS OUR ONLY REMAINING TELEPATH.
...WE MUST TRUST IN PSYLOCKE'S GIFTS
I TELEPATHCALLY OBTAINED AN IMPRINT OF THE CODED LOCK SEQUENCE
GET READY
BEEP BEEP BEEP
...WE'VE NO IDEA WHAT'S BEYOND THIS DOOR

GOODESS!
--VACUUM--? --HOW--
--THE DOOR-- --CLOSE IT--!
BETTS-- HURRY!
PSYLOCKE-- I CANNOT CONTROL THE GALE FORCE-- FOR MUCH LONGER!
..ALMOST.. HAVE..
PROOPH
SSTHWIPT
BRIGHT LADY-- THAT WAS CLOSER THAN I WOULD HAVE LIKED
"..IT!"
BETA UNIT REPORTING IN.
WE HAVE ASCERTAINED SCOTT AND JEAN'S LOCATION..

HE TOOK 'EM OUTSIDE-- TO THE SURFACE OF THE MOON?
YUP.
GEEZ
HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO FOLLOW?
CABLE CAN TELEPORT US WHEREVER WE WANT TA GO
NO, HE CAN'T.
IN ORDER TO GET HERE, I HAD TO RE-CALIBRATE THE MATRIX BEAM ON MY TELE-PORTATION SYSTEM TO PUNCH A HOLE THROUGH STRYFE'S SHIELDS
GRAYMALKIN CAN'T GENERATE THE POWER TO TELEPORT FOR A WHILE.
GRAYMALKIN?
LATER, SAM
THERE'S NO MORE LATER BETWEEN US
WE TALK NOW.
LATER
LET'S USE THAT SHIP OF APOCALYPSE'S THAT BROUGHT YOU HERE.
SAM. I KNOW HOW HARD IT--
'PRECIATE IT, ALEX, BUT.
...LET'S GO
NICE RAPPORT THOSE TWO HAVE, HUH?

SHUFFS
SHUFFS
WEAK
STILL-- SO WEAK.
PRESS ON · BE STRONG
AH--!
SKOSH
SKOSH
YOU HAVE FOUND US, FATHER
JUST THE WAY YOU WANTED US· READY TO FIGHT-- TO WIN!

YOU MADE US, NOW WE UNMAKE YOU.
THIS COMPLETES THE CYCLE YOU TAUGHT US TO LIVE BY
VERY WELL THEN, MY DARK RIDERS, TO THE SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST--!
TO THE DEATH!
WHAT EXACTLY ARE WE LOOKING FOR-- THREE PEOPLE WALKING ON THE MOON ?
MAYBE
IF THEY DID LEAVE THE MOON-BASE, WOULDN'T IT MAKE SENSE STRYFE WAS GOIN' SOMEWHERE SPECIFIC ?
IT WOULD, SAM-- BUT VERY LITTLE STRYFE HAS DONE HAS MADE SENSE TO ME SO FAR.
HOW DO YOU KNOW HOW TA FLY APOCALYPSE'S SHIP PRETTY-AB-YOU-PLEASE ?
I'M ON USER-FRIENDLY TERMS WITH THE TECHNOLOGY IT WAS DERIVED FROM.

BULLPEN BULLETINS

MARVEL COMICS

STAN'S SOAPBOX

Hi, Heroes!

What good's a Soapbox if it isn't used to tell you things you didn't know? I'll bet few of you were aware that mighty Marvel's sensational sister company across the sea, Marvel Comics U.K. (U.K. standing for United Kingdom, of course) has taken the once-staid British populace by storm with the creation of a pulse-pounding plethora of startling new super heroes, featured in England's own cosmic collection of costumed crusaders — the now-legendary best-seller — OVERKILL!

But, since few True Believers are able to fly to England each fortnight to pick up the latest editions, your big-hearted Bullpen has solved the problem for you! We've arranged to ship most of Marvel U.K.'s titanic new titles to your favorite comicbook stores in America! No longer shall we underprivileged colonials be deprived of the mother country's harvest of heroes! And what a caravansary of cataclysmic characters they are! Just the briefest listing of their titles should give you an inkling of the wonderment in store ...

Zooming to the U.S. at the end of '92 you'll meet DEATH'S HEAD II, MOTOR-MOUTH & KILLPOWER, THE KNIGHTS OF PENDRAGON, DIGITEK, BATTLE-TIDE (the senses-staggering battle between Death's Head II and Killpower), WARHEADS, DARK ANGEL, TEAM HELIX, and NIGHTRAVEN!

But that's only the beginning of Britain's super hero invasion! Early in '93 don't miss the way-out wonderment of MYSTECH WARS, DEATH RATTLE, SHADOW RIDERS, BLOOD SEED, GENE MACHINE, WILD THING, BLACK-AXE, SUPER SOLDIERS, GUN RUNNER, DEATH METAL, and the mind-blasting mystery of — PLASMER!

Perhaps the most spectacular surprise of all is the fact that the entire kaboodle of British heroes meet, greet, and interact with your own favorites from Marvel U.S.A.! So don't be surprised to see Wolverine and Sabretooth pop up in Battletide's limited-series, or to find Warheads, Mephisto and the Silver Surfer sharing the same adventures! As always, the Marvel Universe is one and inseparable, so anything happening anywhere affects all else in our ever-constant, ever-changing cosmos!

'Tis with happy heart and cheerful mien that I bid thee adieu, buoyed by the knowledge that the incalculable power of this month's Soapbox has insured that thou shalt not miss the triumphant entry of Marvel U.K.'s horde of heroes to our grand and grateful shores!

Excelsior!

Stan

Stan Lee

Everybody's doin' it! No, we're not talking about hologram covers — we're talking about gettin' hitched. Takin' the plunge. Checkin' into the matrimonial institution. Doin' the marriage thing.

Lately there have been a rash of weddings among the editorial staff of Mighty Marvel — they've been popping up like zits on a New Warrior. Following in the footsteps of Reed and Sue ... Peter and Mary Jane .. Dr. Octopus and Aunt May .. many of our mighty Marveloids have decided to pursue lives of wedded bliss. Tieing the knot is a big commitment — it's like when Hercules quits his job as a solo hero and becomes an Avenger.

One editor who is solo no longer is Associate Editor **Evan Skolnick**, who this past July said "I do" to his own British import, **Lynn White**, after a whirlwind three month courtship. In addition to his recent nuptials, Evan was recently promoted to Associate Editor of such titles of ORIGINAL GHOST RIDER and MARVEL YEAR IN REVIEW. Sounds like he'll have quite a year of his own to review.

Evan's former boss, **Fabian Nicieza**, writer of NOMAD, last month gave up his life of wandering as he settled down and married his longtime sweetheart, **Tracey Lee**. It only took *twelve years* for Fabe to make that decision — that's one heck of a deadline! Fabe's brother, **Mariano**, of the Promotions Department, threw a blowout bachelor party for fabulous Fabe, which featured a special mega-entertaining slideshow of "The Lives and Time of Fabian." It was attended by many of the brightest and best guys (no girls allowed, natch) in the business.

Fabian's NOMAD editor **Glenn** "Helium" **Herdling** seems to have found religion. Not only is he writing PARAGON for our new religious comics line, but he also was made an honest man last month by his new bride, **Laura Eckhardt**. Glenn took his lady love up in a balloon, and popped the question — but not the balloon, fortunately. Glenn's proposal first appeared in comic book form in WHAT IF #31. Glenn presented Laura with a copy of the comic while up in the balloon, and she answered in the affirmative quicker than Tom DeFalco approving a new Thor series.

Still waiting for approval for that Quasar/Ren & Stimpy team-up is **Mark Gruenwald**, who also slipped the quantum band around the finger of his new bride, **Catherine Schuller**, last month. Performing at Mark's wedding was WOLVERINE writer **Larry Hama**'s band, the K-Otics! Mark and Catherine's wedding song was "One More Kiss," from the movie *Bladerunner*! (Now if only we could make a *replicant* of Mark, we could get twice as much work out of him!)

Bullpen cartoonist **Rick Parker**, still basking in the success of his best-selling book with **Barry Dutter**, *Everything I Really Need to Know I learned From Television*, also walked down the aisle last month with BARBIE writer **Lisa Trusiani** at a ceremony in Falmouth, Maine. The reception included a good old New England style clambake, and all the guests were treated to a cruise on lovely Casco Bay. Unfortunately, the Love Boat's Captain Stubing was unavailable to perform the wedding ceremony.

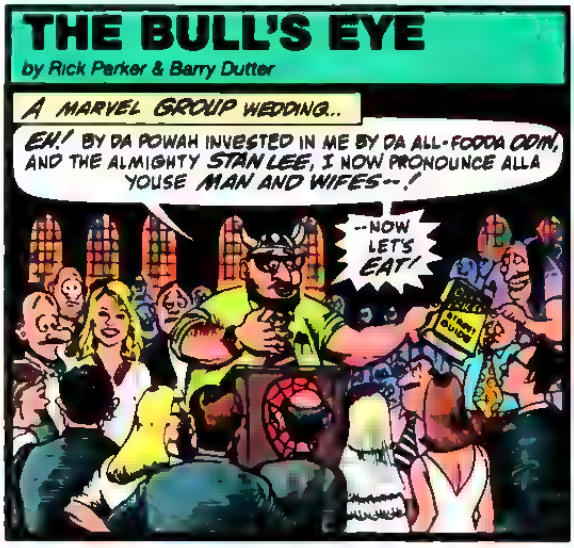
Sadly, Pin-Head of the Cenobites, doesn't do weddings, either. Pin-Head's boss, HELLRAISER editor **Marcus McLaurin**, is used to seeing souls torn apart over in the pages of that mag. But MM will take part in the joining of two souls when he exchanges vows with his intended, **Janet Paes**, next May. Marcus proposed to Janet on the Sky Ride at Disneyworld last January. Surely this wedding will be an Epic event, though hopefully not a harrowing one. (Or are we Barkering up the wrong tree?)

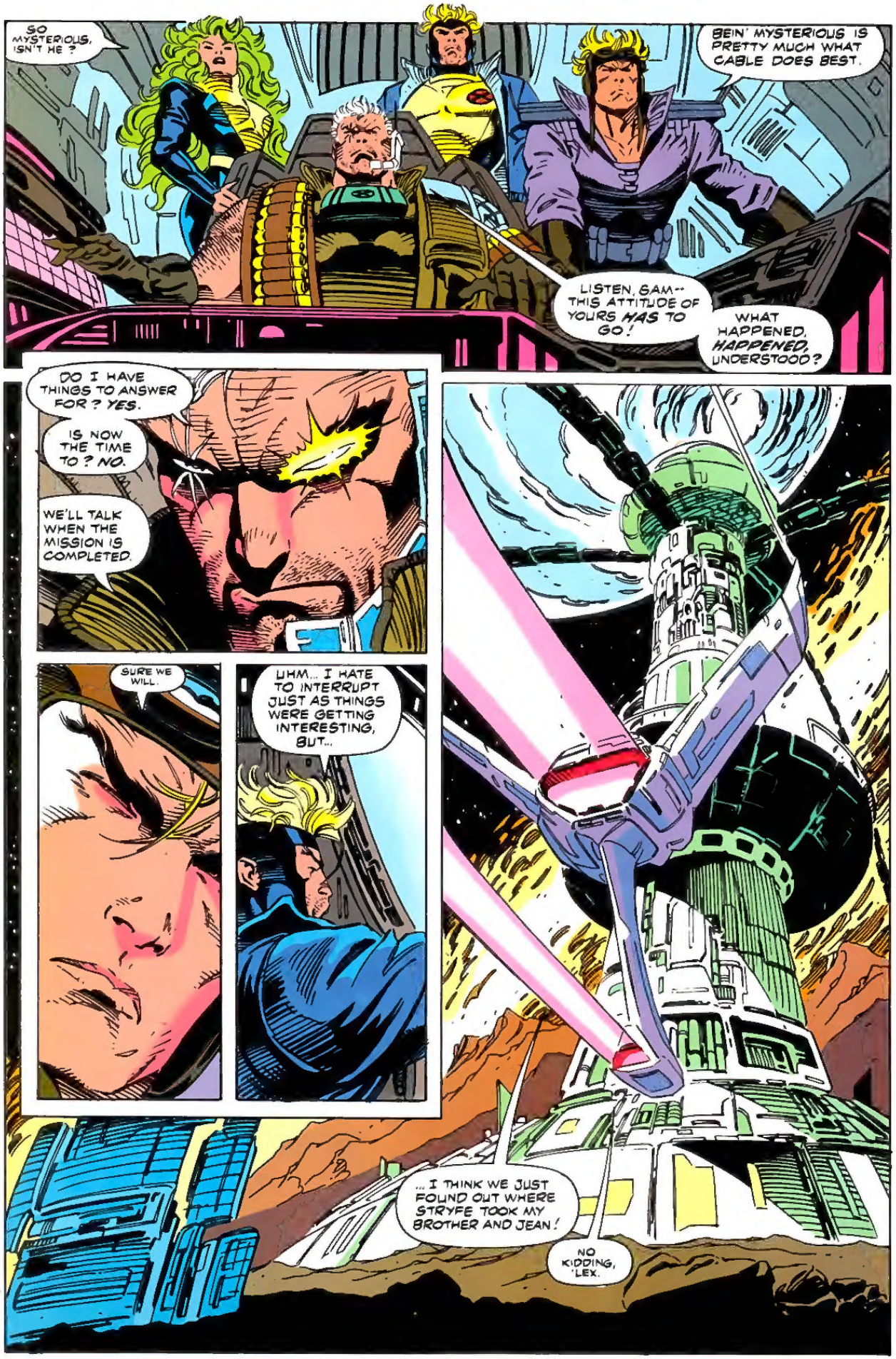
Finally, we come to HULK editor **Bobbie Chase**, whose gamma-irradiated nuptials will be taking place next June. **Craig Kunaschk**, of the Direct Sales Department, proposed to Bobbie at the top of a mountain in St.Maartin while the two were on vacation. It is hoped that their union will bring Marvel's editorial and sales departments closer together, and bring even greater unity to the Marvel family. Surely it won't be long before Bobbie and Craig will have little Midnight Sons and Daughters of their own running around all over the place.

Warmest wedding wishes to all our newlyweds! And remember the lesson learned by Spider-Man not so long ago: With great weddings come great catering bills!

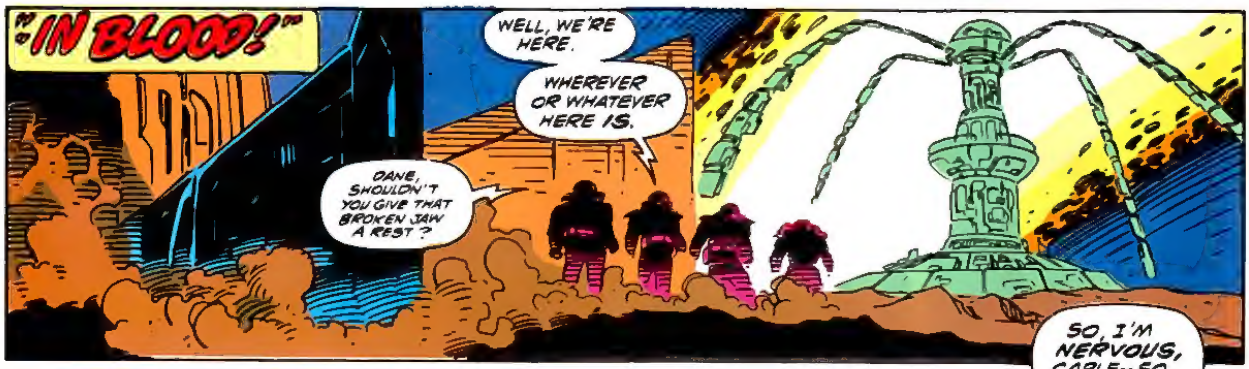
THE BULL'S EYE

by Rick Parker & Barry Dutter

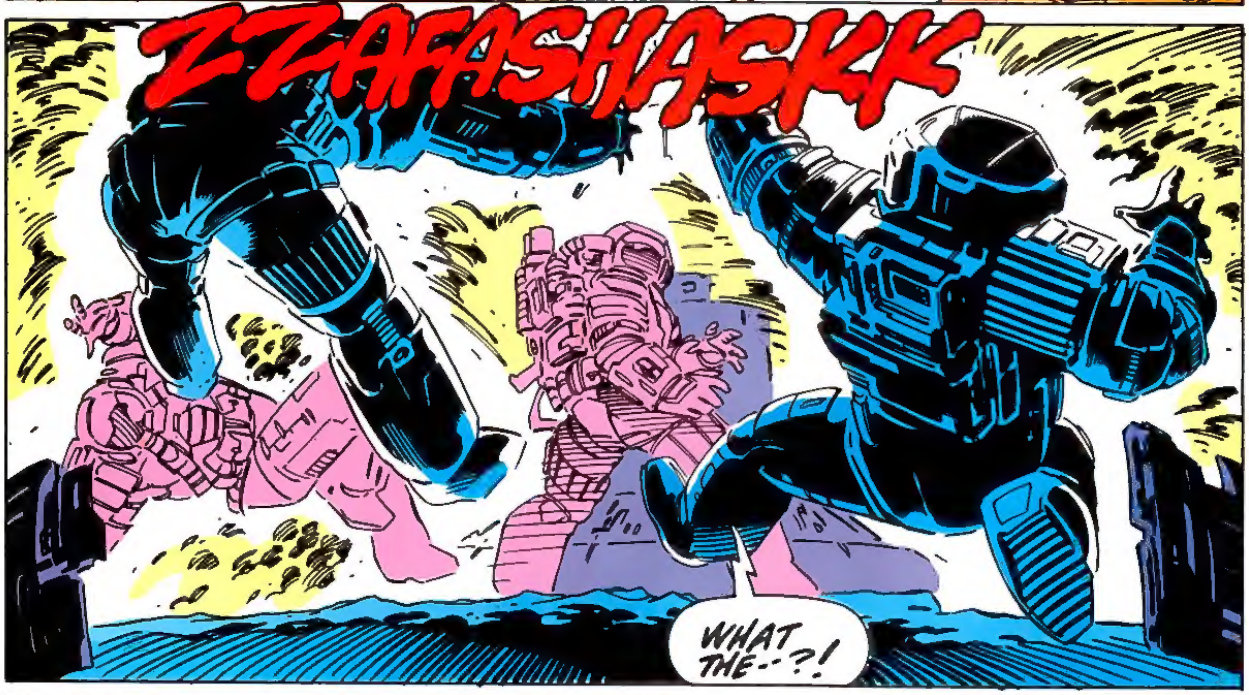


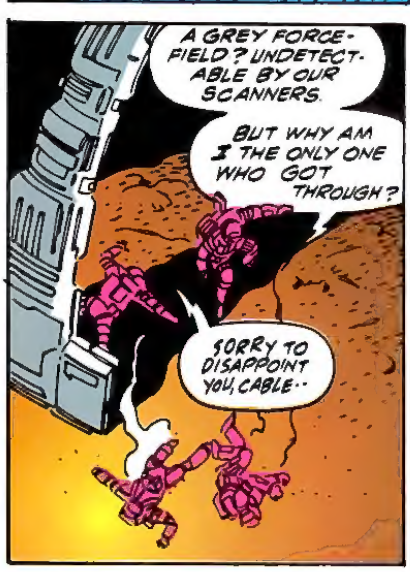

SO MYSTERIOUS, ISN'T HE ?
BEIN' MYSTERIOUS IS PRETTY MUCH WHAT CABLE DOES BEST.
LISTEN, SAM-- THIS ATTITUDE OF YOURS HAS TO GO !
WHAT HAPPENED, HAPPENED, UNDERSTOOD ?
DO I HAVE THINGS TO ANSWER FOR ? YES.
IS NOW THE TIME TO ? NO.
WE'LL TALK WHEN THE MISSION IS COMPLETED.
SURE WE WILL.
UHM... I HATE TO INTERRUPT JUST AS THINGS WERE GETTING INTERESTING, BUT...
... I THINK WE JUST FOUND OUT WHERE STRYFE TOOK MY BROTHER AND JEAN !
NO KIDDING, 'LEX.

KRAKA KOOM
XAVIER'S MANSION. THE STORM HAS GOTTEN WORSE.
HANK, I'VE BROUGHT YE SOME--
OOCH!
ASLEEP. THE MAN HAS NEAR EXHAUSTED HIMSELF.
I'LL JUST--
INSIDE THE MACHINE!
THE VIRUS-- DID IT--INSIDE THE MACHINE IS A MAN!
CABLE AND STRYFE-- APOCALYPSE AND SINISTER-- SCOTT AND JEAN--
-- I SAW THEM INSIDE AND OUT!
PROFESSOR!
YOU'RE AWAKE... THANK HEAVEN! PLEASE TRY TO--
RAHNE, HANK-- YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND!
THE DREAMS-- THE PLANS--THEY'RE ALL DESIGNS--GRAND DESIGNS--
--MACHINATIONS OF A SORT --AND ALL OF US-- WE'RE ALL GHOSTS IN THAT MACHINE!
SCOTT AND JEAN AND CABLE AND STRYFE --ALL OF THEM LINKED TO US IN LOVE AND HATE--
--BUT MOST OF ALL, LINKED TO EACH OTHER--


"IN BLOOD!"
WELL, WE'RE HERE.
WHEREVER OR WHATEVER HERE IS.
DANE, SHOULDN'T YOU GIVE THAT BROKEN JAW A REST?

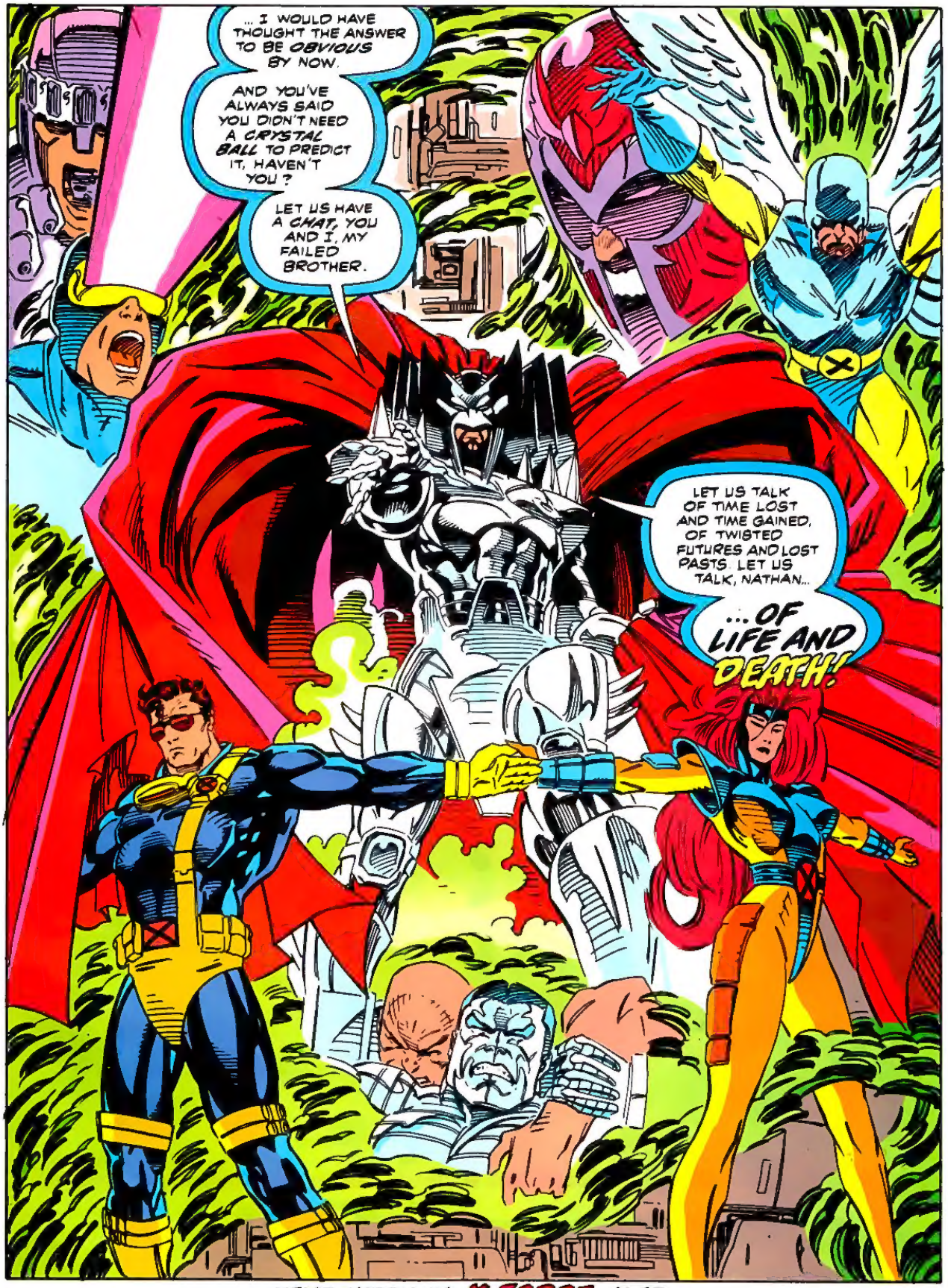
SO, I'M NERVOUS, CABLE--SO SUE ME!
SORRY, I'M NERVOUS, TOO.
SCANNER'S ARE CLEAR, LET'S MOVE IN.


ZZAFASHASKK
WHAT THE--?!


A GREY FORCE-FIELD? UNDETECTABLE BY OUR SCANNERS.
BUT WHY AM I THE ONLY ONE WHO GOT THROUGH?
SORRY TO DISAPPOINT YOU, CABLE--

--WHAT EVER IT WAS--
--IT DIDN'T GET ME, EITHER--
--LEAST NOT AS BAD AS IT GOT--
--LORNA AND SAM.
HAVOK?!
WHICH STILL DOESN'T ANSWER THE QUESTION--WHY US?

COME NOW, NATHAN DAYSPRING...



NEXT WEEK, IN X-FORCE #18--

THE CONCLUSION TO X-CUTIONER'S SONG!

CABLE VS. STRYFE --TO THE FINISH!